

Thank you co-chair Thompson and co-chair Greenlick, members of the committee. My name is Lora Reynolds. I've lived in Oregon nearly all my life. I am currently a personal health coach, but have also worked for other Oregon companies.

Attending this hearing is so important to me to support the presenting of Take Shape for Life as a life saving, life changing program. I completely agree with the idea that if the state gave treating obesity a similar priority to that as our other number 1 killers, that state workers and those receiving public assistance will be better off and health care costs will be reduced.

I had reached 267 pounds after my cancer removal and felt so sick and even more tired most days. Told by my doctor that my weight gain and severe lack of energy was "normal" after the degree and extent of my cancer and that losing weight was going to be next to impossible. He even gave me a medication that he said could possibly help with weight loss, told me to eat better and get some exercise. I didn't want ANOTHER medication, but doctor knows best, right? I had already started eating better and trying to get exercise when I wasn't feeling so lethargic. You can imagine my state of mind at this time as well. I was very depressed.

My cousin, my (free) health coach with Take Shape for Life, who had a different but similar health issue lost 87 pounds in 90 days. He is quite inspiring! I started the program after hearing and seeing his successful results. By day 4, I felt a noticeable improvement in my energy (energy I haven't seen since teen years). By day 10, my doctor had to take me off of that medication that he had just put me on because it was plummeting my blood sugar levels. I am no longer taking anti-depressants either. I lost 45 pounds in my first 2.5 months.

Spending money on creating health as opposed to prescribing a medication to ease disease symptoms is key in turning things around for American health and budget crisis. I urge you to take additional action and change the focus of the Oregon Health Authority, and all state agencies involved in health care and delivery of services to our state. Wellness programs that include personal coaching have saved a lot of money for businesses nationwide, and the NW. If you adopt an incentive model, not forced participation, I'm sure other Oregonians will see their lives improve too. And with decreased health care costs to the state you'll have the appreciation of taxpayers. Making this small change, covering wellness programs will free up so much money wasted on prescriptions and with people feeling like there is hope and being given their lives back like I have been given mine back; this can be the first life-changing step getting them off of state assistance! The BIGGER picture is better, all around in this scenario!

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